

AFFIDAVIT

I, Matthew Ekstrom, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I am a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and have been so employed for approximately eighteen years. In my capacity as a Special Agent, I am familiar with the federal laws relating to firearms and controlled substances, and I am aware that it is a federal offense to provide false information to a federal firearms licensee while purchasing a firearm.

2. This affidavit is submitted to show that probable cause exists to believe that on July 7, 2019, Travis NORRIS provided false information to a federal firearms licensee during the acquisition of a firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6).

3. I am familiar with the facts and circumstances of this investigation based on my own work on this case and from conversations with other law enforcement officers and witnesses. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause to believe the above crime occurred and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.

4. On July 1, 2019, Travis NORRIS attempted to purchase a Taurus model Spectrum .380 caliber pistol serial number 1F119487 from Vermont Field Sports in Middlebury, VT, a federal firearms licensee. This transaction was delayed by the National Instant Check System (NICS)/Brady Branch to investigate the circumstances concerning the arrest of NORRIS by the Vermont State Police (VSP) on April 29, 2019 for the possession of a controlled substance, as well as multiple drug arrests within the past five years.

5. A review of VSP records show NORRIS was arrested at the Maplefields convenience store in Shoreham, VT on April 29, 2019 for possession of two bags of heroin. The VSP report shows NORRIS was inside the store looking to change a one hundred dollar bill and

became irate at the store clerk. During the incident, NORRIS threw items from his pockets on the store counter, including, heroin wrapped in wax paper bags. NORRIS later told VSP that he obtained the heroin from a friend and was looking to get rid of the heroin as he used heroin in the past but was currently clean.

6. On July 3, 2019, Bellows Falls Police Department Sergeant Mario Checchi encountered NORRIS, NORRIS' girlfriend Ashleigh Rounds and an individual identified as Forrest Mitchell during a traffic stop in Bellows Falls, VT. During this encounter, NORRIS provided written consent to Sergeant Checchi to search his vehicle. During the search, Sergeant Checchi found a plastic Pelican box in the trunk of the vehicle which contained approximately one hundred and eighty bags of heroin. Sergeant Checchi also recovered eight bags of heroin and a small amount of crack cocaine concealed on Mitchell's person. Sergeant Checchi spoke with NORRIS who stated the heroin in the Pelican case belonged to Mitchell, but there were empty bags of heroin and narcotics paraphernalia in the vehicle which belonged to him. NORRIS stated he attempted to travel to Springfield, MA to bring Mitchell to Barre, VT. However, NORRIS' vehicle had broken down and he had to pick Mitchell up in Brattleboro, VT. NORRIS stated Mitchell was going to pay NORRIS with the heroin Mitchell had on his person for bringing him to Barre, VT.

7. On July 7, 2019, NORRIS returned to Vermont Field Sports and the Taurus model Spectrum .380 caliber pistol serial number 1F119487 was transferred to him. NORRIS certified with his signature on ATF Form 4473 that all of his answers to the questions in section A of the ATF Form 4473 were correct. Question 11e in section A asks: "Are you an unlawful user of, or addicted to marijuana or any depressant, stimulant, narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance?" NORRIS answered this question: "no."

8. On August 15, 2019, ATF Special Agent Christopher Bzduch and I interviewed NORRIS at the Vermont State Police Rutland Barracks. I told NORRIS he was not obligated to meet with us to conduct the interview, he was not under arrest, and he was free to end the interview and leave at any time. NORRIS stated he believed he was originally denied the purchase of the Taurus .380 caliber pistol due to his arrest for possession of a controlled substance by the VSP in the incident at the Maplefields convenience store in April of 2019. NORRIS said he became addicted to heroin and crack cocaine following the death of his father in July of 2018, but had since gone to drug rehabilitation and was not currently using heroin or crack cocaine. However, NORRIS still uses marijuana daily.

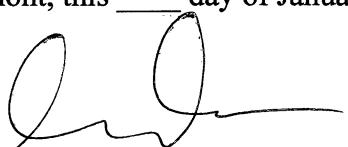
9. NORRIS further said that on July 3, 2019, he and Rounds travelled to Springfield, MA to pick up a friend he knew as “Mitch,” identified from the Bellows Falls Police Department stop as Forrest Mitchell. NORRIS stated Mitchell was going to give him a quarter pound of marijuana for bringing Mitchell from MA to VT.

10. NORRIS said after learning ATF was looking to speak to him about the purchase of the Taurus model Spectrum .380 caliber pistol he went to retrieve the firearm from his grandmother’s residence in Shoreham, VT. NORRIS stored the firearm under his bed in a lockbox at his grandmother’s residence. When NORRIS went to retrieve the firearm it was not in the lockbox and he does not know where the firearm went. NORRIS said he recently had a friend he only knew as “Ethan” staying at his residence. NORRIS met “Ethan” in Burlington, VT and believed “Ethan” was a narcotics dealer. NORRIS let “Ethan” stay at his grandmother’s residence for a few days before driving “Ethan” to the bus station in White River Junction, VT to return to his home in New Jersey. NORRIS suspected that “Ethan” may have stolen the Taurus .380 caliber pistol.

11. On January 11, 2020, the Jersey City Police Department responded to shots fired at Communipaw Avenue and Crescent Avenue in Jersey City, NJ. While arriving at the scene officers observed a Chevy Equinox sports utility vehicle leaving the scene at a high rate of speed. Officers were able to stop the vehicle soon after and detained three individuals. From inside the vehicle officers recovered suspected cocaine, along with the Taurus model Spectrum .380 caliber pistol serial number 1F119487 purchased by NORRIS. Officers were also able to recover expended .380 caliber shells from the area of the shooting. An individual believed to be the victim of the shooting later arrived at a local area hospital with two gunshot wounds.

12. On January 21, 2020, the New Jersey State Police conducted a National Integrated Ballistic Information (NIBIN) analysis on the Taurus .380 caliber pistol and the shell casings recovered from the scene of the shooting in Jersey City, NJ on January 11, 2020. The casings recovered from the scene of the shooting matched the firearm, as well as nine .380 caliber cartridge cases recovered from a separate shooting in Jersey City, NJ on November 11, 2019.

Dated at Burlington, in the District of Vermont, this 28th day of January, 2020.



MATTHEW EKSTROM
Special Agent, ATF

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of January, 2020.



JOHN M. CONROY
United States Magistrate Judge